MISS America

JANUARY • 10¢

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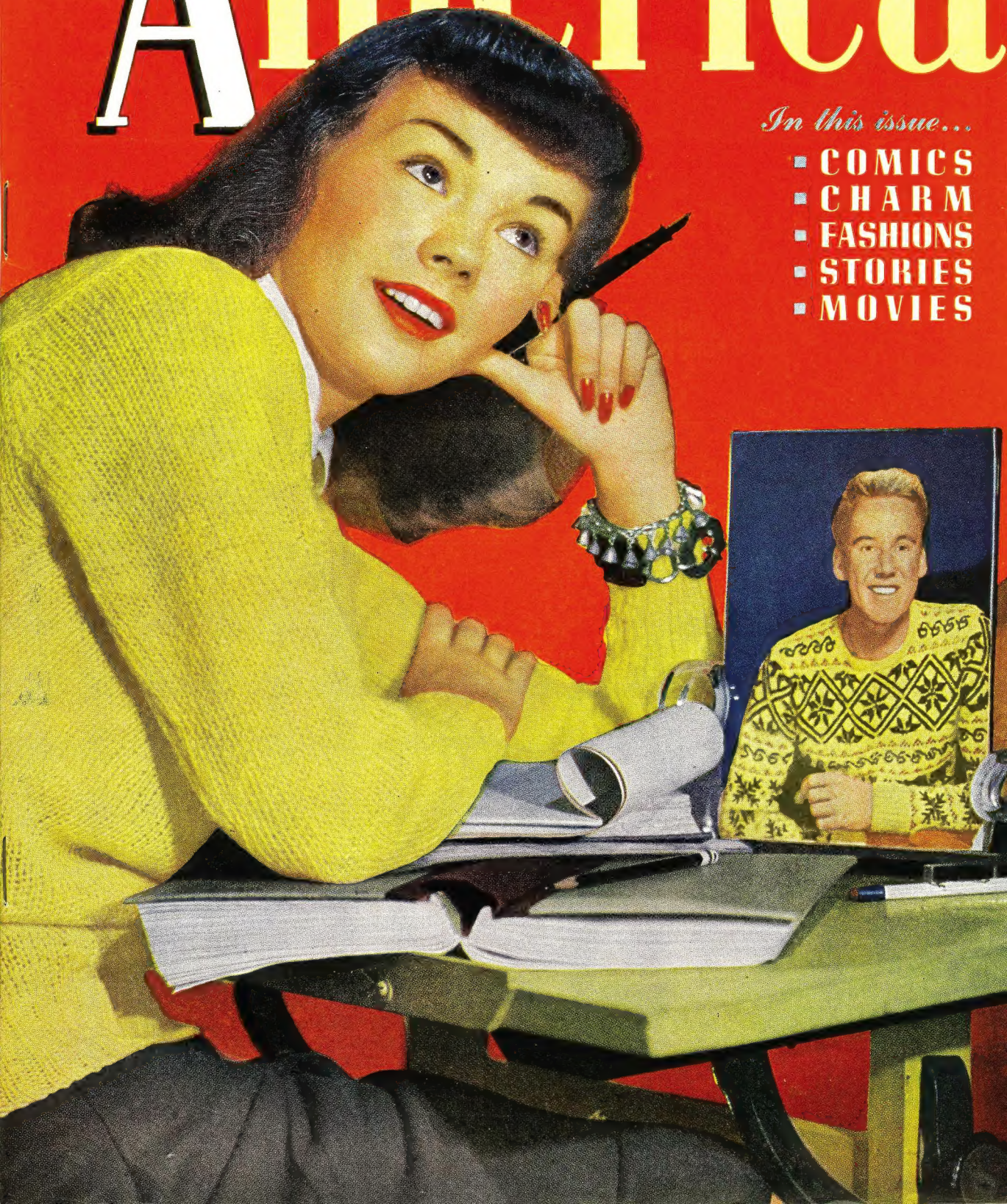
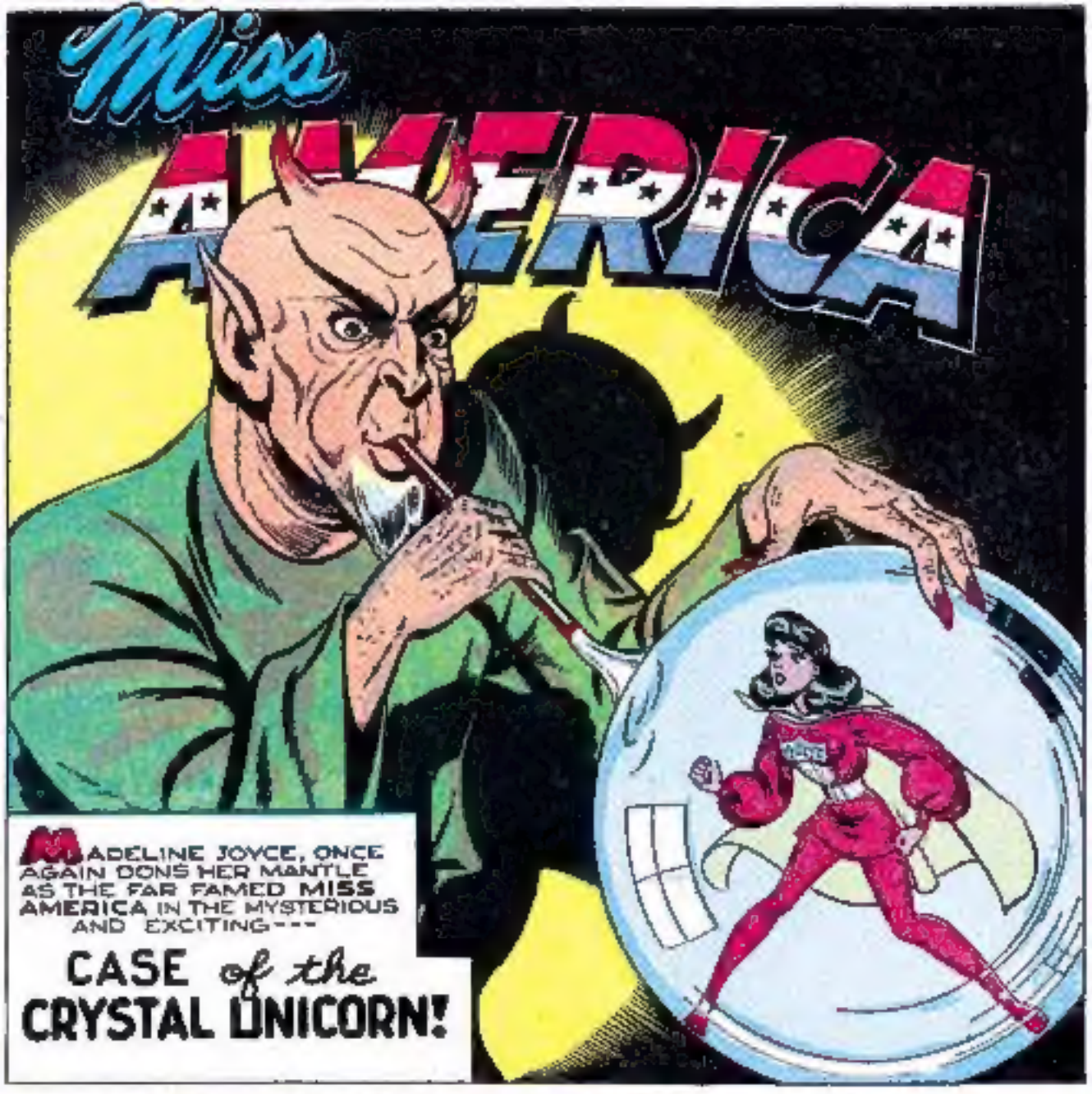
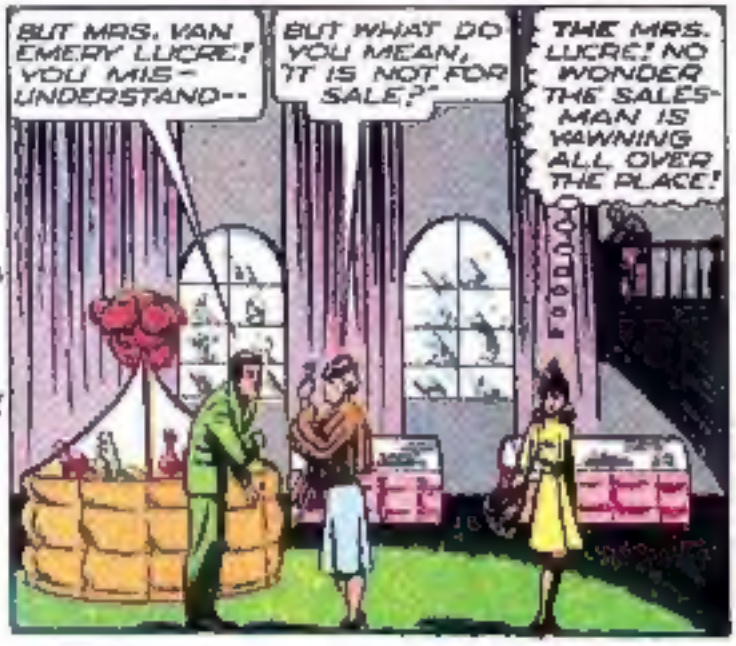



Miss
AMERICA
MADELINE JOYCE, ONCE AGAIN DONS HER MANTLE AS THE FAR FAMED MISS AMERICA IN THE MYSTERIOUS AND EXCITING---
CASE of the CRYSTAL UNICORN!

MADELINE JOYCE, HOMEWARD BOUND AFTER A DAY'S SHOPPING IS ATTRACTED BY A CROWD BEFORE A MAIN AVENUE SHOP!
IMAGINE ME RUBBERNECKING, YET I CAN'T RESIST THE URGE TO GET A PEEP MYSELF! I'LL LEAVE THESE BUNDLES IN THE CAR!

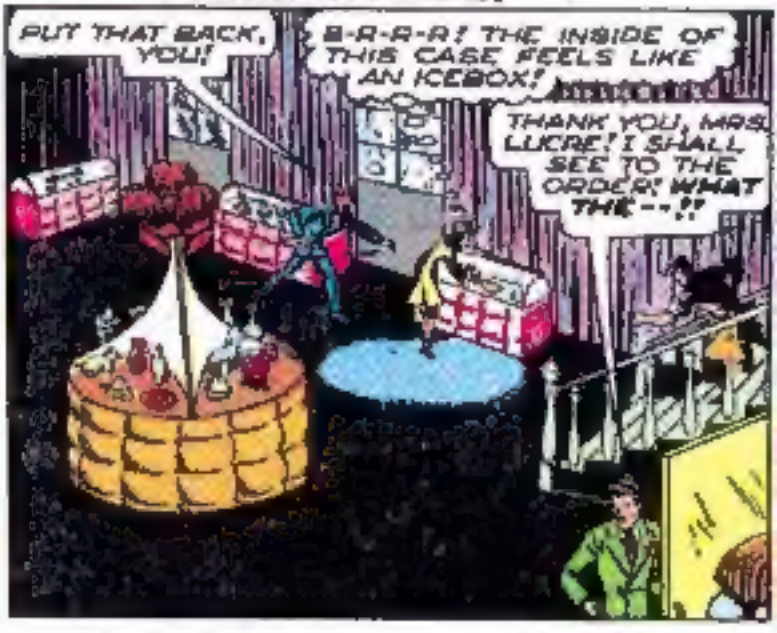
AFTER A GOOD DEAL OF GOOD NATURED PUSHING AND MANUEVERING, MADELINE GAINS A POINT OF VANTAGE!
IMAGINE! A FEW SECONDS AGO IT WAS JUST GLASS AND NOW IT'S A SWAN!
I MUST GET SOMETHING FOR UNCLE JIM'S DEN!

INSIDE THE SHOP, WHILE WAITING HER TURN TO BE SERVED, MADELINE OVERHEARS THE LOUD HAUGHTY TONES OF AN INDIGNANT CUSTOMER!


BUT MRS. VAN EMERY LUCRE! YOU MIS-UNDERSTAND--
BUT WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "IT IS NOT FOR SALE?"
THE MRS. LUCRE! NO WONDER THE SALESMAN IS YAWNING ALL OVER THE PLACE!

DEAR LADY, ALL THESE ARE DISPLAY SAMPLES! HOWEVER, WE SHOULD DEEM IT A PRIVILEDGE TO DUPLICATE THIS MASTER CREATION FOR YOU!

THE QUIET OF THE SHOP IS SUDDENLY BROKEN AS MADELINE SLIDES BACK THE GLASS COVERS AND TAKES THE PEACOCK FROM THE CASE!



PRICELESS CRAFTSMANSHIP! THE VERY THING FOR THE MALE! NOTE THE STRENGTH OF LINE IN THIS UNUSUAL CREATION!
IT IS NICE! HOW SOON CAN YOU MAKE ONE UP FOR ME!
AH! MRS. RITZBILT! OH JOHN! PACK THE STAG FOR MADAME! THE PRICE IS $25.00!
BUT-I-- THOUGHT--??
THAT'S FUNNY, HE TOLD MRS. LUCRE NONE OF THESE OBJECTS WERE FOR SALE AND THEN SOLD ME THE STAG--!?
HERE YOU ARE, LADY!
YOU SAID IT WOULD BE READY TODAY AND I THOUGHT I WOULD TAKE IT ALONG WITH ME!
A THOUSAND PARDONS, MRS. RITZBILT! SO WE DID! HOW CAN I BEGIN TO EXPLAIN!
IT LOOKS COMPLETE TO ME!
AH! SO IT DOES! WE ARTISTS CANNOT EXPECT THE LAYMAN TO UNDERSTAND THE FINAL TOUCHES! YOU MUST ALLOW US ANOTHER 24 HOURS! IT SHALL BE DELIVERED TOMORROW EVENING!
HOURS LATER IN HER UNCLE'S DEN!
STILL PLAYING WITH THAT GLASS STAG! ANYTHING WRONG? YOU SEEM PREOCCUPIED!
IT'S NOTHING, UNCLE JIM! JUST A SLIGHT HEADACHE! THINK I'LL GO FOR A WALK!

MADELINE, BUSY WITH HER THOUGHTS, IS UNAWARE HER STEPS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE GLASS SHOP AS IF BY SOME STRANGE MAGNETIC FORCE!

SILLY OF ME TO PUZZLE ABOUT IT! YET I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHY I WAS ALLOWED TO BUY THE STAG AND MRS. LUCRE WAS TOLD HERS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE UP??

THEN, TELLING MRS. RITZBILT THAT THE PEACOCK WASN'T READY?? I HELD IT AND EXAMINED IT AND I COULD SWEAR IT WAS FINISHED.?? OOPS! AN ELEVATOR COMING UP! GOOD GOSH! THE GLASS SHOP? HOW DID I GET HERE!?!
OBJETS D'ART
R-R-RING-G

O.K.--- COAST IS CLEAR! GET IT ON THE TRUCK! HURRY!
I HAVE AN IDEA MY HUNCH ABOUT SOMETHING BREWING HERE IS GOING TO BLOSSOM INTO SOMETHING REAL BIG!

HMN? STRANGE TIME OF NIGHT TO MAKE DELIVERIES! AND THAT CASE SEEMS QUITE HEAVY! I THINK MISS AMERICA WILL BE TAKING OVER FROM HERE!

HIGH IN THE AIR, MISS AMERICA FOLLOWS THE TRAIL OF THE DELIVERY TRUCK TO A DARK, DESERTED SECTION OF THE RIVER FRONT!

THE GLASS BLOWER AND THAT OILY SALESMAN DUCKED BACK INTO THE SHOP AND LEFT THE DELIVERY OF THAT HEAVY CASE TO THE PORTER AND BOOKKEEPER---OH, OH! THEY TURNED AND ARE DRIVING OUT TO THE END OF THE PIER!

SO, "MAISON DE CRISTAL" PLANNED TO DELIVER THAT CASE TO THE RIVER BOTTOM! TIME WE STOPPED DELIVERY!

OUT OF MY WAY, LITTLE MAN! THE BIG GUY FIRST!

HEY! YO-W-EOF-F!

WHAT THE---?

DON'T BE IMPATIENT, RUNT! YOUR TURN'LL COME!

Y-EOWW! I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HER IN THE DARK! THAT'S MISS AMERICA!

BOP!

ON YOUR FEET! WHAT'S YOUR GAME? THE BOOKKEEPER HAS STARTED THE TRUCK! OOPS--- THERE GOES THE CASE INTO THE RIVER!

SUMMONING ALL HER STRENGTH, MISS AMERICA PREVENTS THE MYSTERIOUS CASE FROM TOPPLING INTO THE DARK WATERS! SIMULTANEOUSLY, A POLICE WHISTLE PIERCES THE NIGHT!

THERE THEY GO-SCURRYING LIKE RATS! IT WAS EITHER SAVING THE CASE OR LETTING THEM ESCAPE! MEANWHILE ---

W-H-I-R-R-R-R-R-R-

NOW TO SEE WHAT THAT SHADY QUARTETTE WERE TRYING TO GET RID OF! HELLO, OFFICER!

I GOT YOU DEAD TO RIGHTS! UP WITH YOUR HANDS! (GULP) IT'S MISS AMERICA!

AS THE CASE IS TORN APART, THE FLASHLIGHT PICKS OUT A GRUESOME SIGHT!

(GASP) DEAD AS A MACKEREL! WONDER WHO HE IS?

THOSE WEIGHTS WOULD HAVE KEPT HIM AT THE DIVER'S BOTTOM FOR ALL TIME! HMMN??

WHILE THE OFFICER STOOPS FOR A CLOSE VIEW, MISS AMERICA SEES A SMALL BLACK NOTEBOOK ON THE GROUND!

ALL IDENTIFICATION MARKS'VE BEEN REMOVED! WHAT'S THAT? DID YOU FIND SOMETHING?

WHY---NO!

I'D WAGER ONE OF THOSE TWO ESCAPING RATS DROPPED IT!

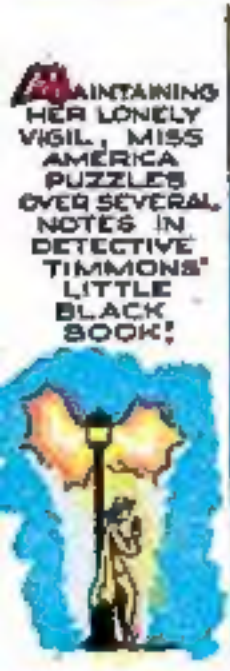
CAN'T SEE VERY MUCH IN THE DARK! I'LL HAVE A BETTER LOOK BEFORE TURNING IT OVER TO THE POLICE!

FUNNY, BUT I THINK I KNOW THE VICTIM!

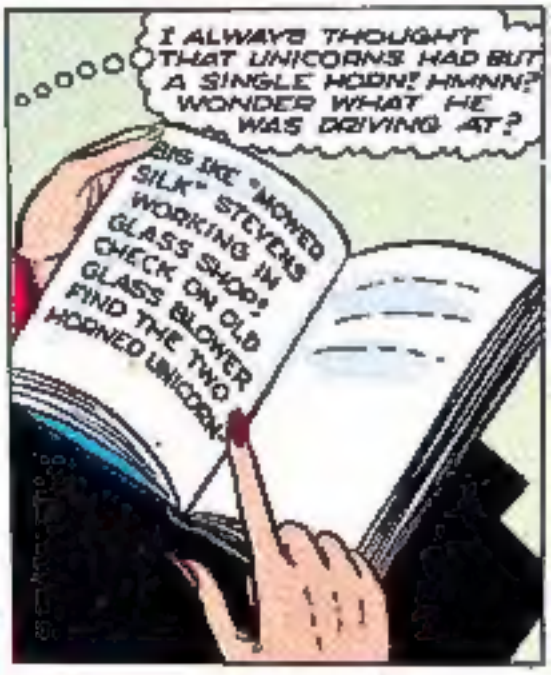
SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW HIM, OFFICER? COULD HE BE A-- DETECTIVE TIMMONS??
OF COURSE! TIMMONS! SAW HIM AT HEADQUARTERS SEVERAL TIMES! HOW DID YOU KNOW?
W-WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO MAKE SURE THAT THE BIRDS HAVEN'T TAKEN WING! THANKS, OFFICER!
MOMENTS LATER, MISS AMERICA PEEKS INTO THE DIMLY LIT SHOP THRU A NARROW SLIT IN THE DOOR SHADE!
HMM?! HEADED RIGHT BACK TO THE SHOP! ALL FOUR ARE IN A HUDDLE IN THERE! NO SIGN OF THEM LEAVING--- I'LL DUCK INTO THE NEXT DOORWAY AND WATCH-- JUST IN CASE!
AND INSIDE THE SHOP--
IT WAS MISS AMERICA!
WE'D BETTER MOVE ON!
I'M RUNNING THINGS AND NO ONE BOWS OUT UNTIL I SAY SO! MISS AMERICA-- BAH!
THEY MAY BE RIGHT, BOSS! THE LAW MAY BE WHISTLING AROUND US ANY SECOND!
SHUT UP, ALL OF YOU! I'LL KILL THE FIRST MAN WHO LEAVES!
THE POLICE HAVE NOTHING ON US! HOW ARE THEY GOING TO PROVE THE CASE CAME FROM HERE! IF MISS AMERICA COMES SNOOPING AROUND, I CAN DEAL WITH HER! YOU ACTED THE SAME WAY WHEN THAT COP, TIMMONS STUMBLED IN ON US!

THE BOSS IS RIGHT! TIMMONS ADMITTED THAT HE WAS ON A ROUTINE INVESTIGATION AND THE POLICE HAD NOTHING ON US BEFORE WE GAVE HIM THE WORKS!
I STILL DON'T LIKE THE WHOLE SET-UP!

HOW ABOUT A COMPROMISE? SUPPOSE WE CALL IT QUITS AFTER THE RITZBILT HAUL TOMORROW NIGHT!
WELL--- O.K., WE'LL PULL THAT JOB AND THEN DIVIDE!


MAINTAINING HER LONELY VIGIL, MISS AMERICA PUZZLES OVER SEVERAL NOTES IN DETECTIVE TIMMONS' LITTLE BLACK BOOK!

THIS NOTE SAYS "CRAWLER" TURNER, PAROLE LAMISTER WORKING IN GLASS SHOP" AND ADDS THAT TIMMONS CHECKED AND THINKS HE HAS STUMBLED ON A CLUE TO THE "SOCIETY ROBBERIES!"


I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT UNICORNS HAD BUT A SINGLE HORN! HMMN? WONDER WHAT HE WAS DRIVING AT?
BIG IKE "MOWED SILK" STEVENS WORKING IN GLASS SHOP! CHECK ON OLD GLASS BLOWER FIND THE TWO HORNED UNICORN!

WHEN, AS DAWN BREAKS--
THEY NEVER CAME OUT OF THE SHOP! THEY MUST HAVE LIVING QUARTERS THERE AND ARE DETERMINED TO CARRY ON WITH THEIR DIRTY WORK! BETTER GET GOING! STREETS COMING TO LIFE!

POLICE HEADQUARTERS!
I'LL GO RIGHT THRU INSPECTOR TATE'S WINDOW! MAYBE HE CAN HELP UNSCRAMBLE TIMMON'S NOTES!

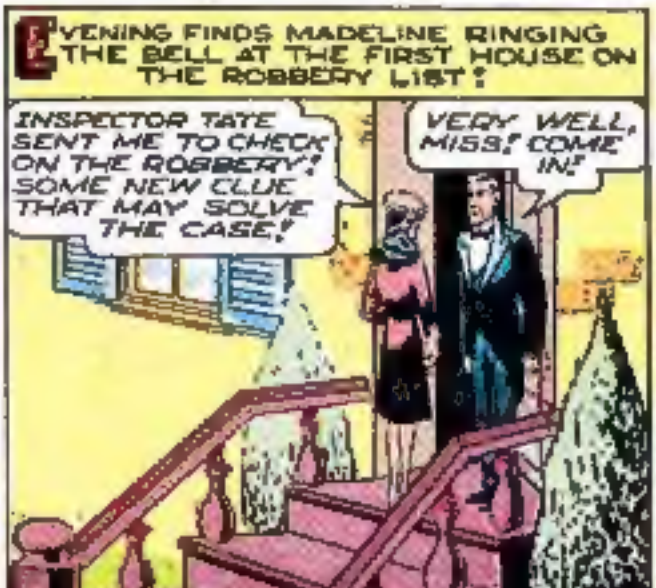
BEEN TWO HOURS DIGGING UP THIS INFORMATION FOR YOU! HERE IT IS! CRAWLER TURNER IS A BURGLAR KNOWN AS THE HUMAN FLY! BIG IKE IS A SAFE CRACKER! SILK STEVENS IS A CONFIDENCE MAN!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE TWO HORNED UNICORN?

NOT A THING ON ANYONE BY THAT NAME! NOW TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
SURE I WILL! IF YOU BREAK DOWN AND ADMIT THAT WHO-EVER KILLED TIMMONS HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THESE "SOCIETY ROBBERIES" WHICH YOU STILL DENY OCCURED!

O.K., YOU WIN! THERE WERE SIX BIG JEWEL JOBS! DIDN'T WANT PUBLICITY--PEOPLE IN-VOLVED ARE BIG NAMES! BUT-- TIMMONS WASN'T ON THE CASE OFFICIALLY!
NOW IF YOU'LL GIVE ME THE NAMES OF THE VICTIMS---

AFTER OBTAINING THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES FROM THE INSPECTOR, MISS AMERICA ZOOMS AWAY!

NOW FOR A HOT TUB AND A FEW WINKS OF SLEEP! THEN ON TO HUNT FOR A TWO HORNED I'N'CORN! NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN BEFORE THIS EVENING-- I HOPE!


EVENING FINDS MADELINE RINGING THE BELL AT THE FIRST HOUSE ON THE ROBBERY LIST!
INSPECTOR TATE SENT ME TO CHECK ON THE ROBBERY! SOME NEW CLUE THAT MAY SOLVE THE CASE!
VERY WELL, MISS! COME IN!

DID YOU SEE A TWO HORNED UNICORN WHEN YOU PURCHASED THIS AT THE GLASS SHOP?

I WAS SO INTERESTED IN THAT CRYSTAL ORCHID AND DIDN'T LOOK AT MUCH ELSE ON DISPLAY!

AND SO ON TO ANOTHER HOME OF A WEALTHY VICTIM!

ISN'T IT JUST TOO LIFE-LIKE! I ADORE SNAKES! I SAW NO UNICORN, BUT YOU MUST STAY AND SEE MY COLLECTION!

THANK YOU! SOME OTHER TIME PERHAPS! GOOD BYE!

THE SIXTH AND LAST HOUSE ON THE LIST!

EVERY HOME ON THE LIST BOUGHT SOME CRYSTAL OBJECT FROM THE SHOP, BUT NO UNICORN! WELL--I HOPE IT'S HERE!

THEN--THE CRYSTAL UNICORN!

UNICORN?! WHY YES -I THINK SO!

THINK SO? YOU KNOW VERY WELL WE GOT IT AT THE SHOP ON MAIN AVENUE! IT'S IN THE CASE THERE!

STUNNED AND DISAPPOINTED MADELINE TRIES TO GRAPPLE WITH THE MYSTERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS!

BUT--THIS HAS ONLY ONE HORN?! ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE SAME ONE YOU BOUGHT AT THE SHOP?

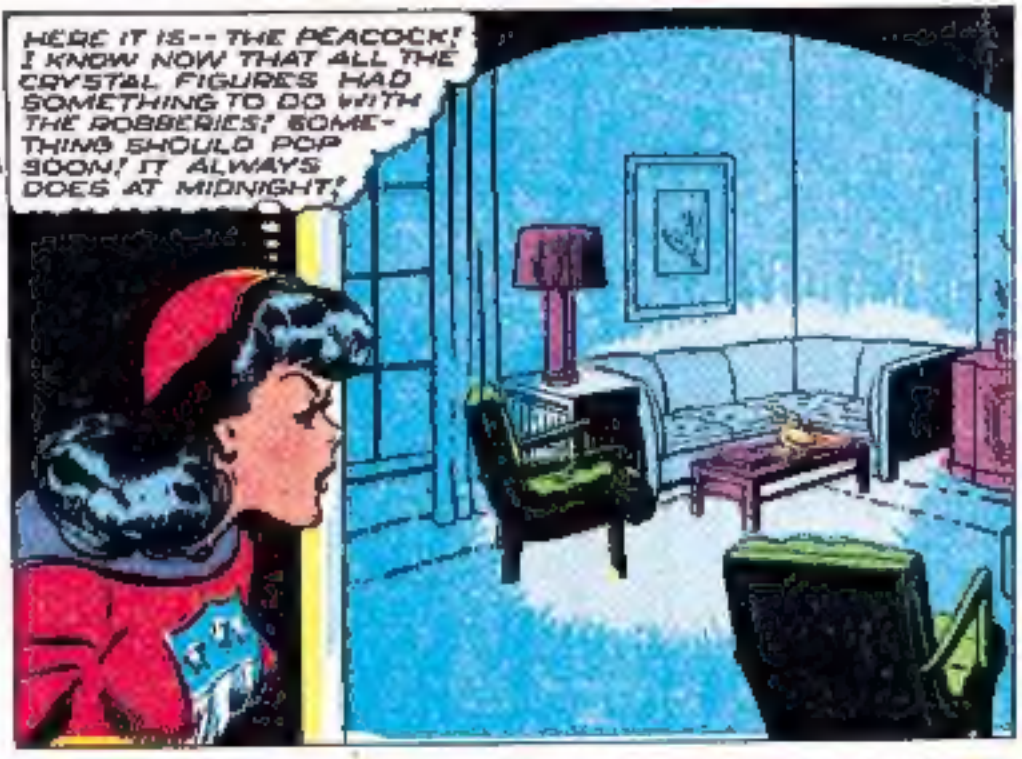
OF COURSE! MY DEAR, YOU ARE MISTAKEN!

HOW DARE YOU CONTRADICT ME? IT HAD ONE HORN!

THERE WERE TWO HORNS!

ELEVEN THIRTY! TIME I WAS AT THE RITZ BILTS!

ONCE OUTSIDE, MADELINE SWIFTLY SWITCHES TO MISS AMERICA, MAKING HER WAY TO THE RITZBILT MANSION! ENTERING SILENTLY, SHE FINDS THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD IN DEEP SLUMBER···


HERE IT IS-- THE PEACOCK! I KNOW NOW THAT ALL THE CRYSTAL FIGURES HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE ROBBERIES! SOMETHING SHOULD POP SOON! IT ALWAYS DOES AT MIDNIGHT!

SUDDENLY, MISS AMERICA'S HEAVY LIDDED EYES POP WIDE IN ASTONISHMENT--

(YAWN) WONDER IF THAT MAN WAS RIGHT ABOUT THAT UNICORN HAVING TWO HORNS?? AND WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?? GOSH! I'M GETTING DROWSY! HEY-- THE PEACOCK!?!

AS MISS AMERICA LOSES HER FIGHT TO REACH THE WINDOW--

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, MISS AMERICA RECOVERS TO FIND HERSELF A PRISONER IN THE CELLAR OF THE GLASS SHOP!

COME ON! I'M FREEZING! THE OTHERS ARE WAITING!

NOT UNTIL I BID MISS AMERICA FAREWELL!

WHAT KIND OF DOPE IS THIS?? IT FEELS LIKE RUBBER!

A SPECIAL SPUN GLASS OF MY OWN! IT CAN'T BREAK! IT EX-PANDS--- BUT CONTRACTS ALSO AS YOU SOON SHALL LEARN!

THIS WILL MAKE IT EVEN COLDER DOWN HERE! AND WITH THE COLD, THE SPUN ROPE WILL CONTRACT MORE AND MORE CUTTING INTO YOUR FLESH AND CRUSHING THE LIFE FROM YOUR BODY! MISS AMERICA WILL BE NO MORE!

YOU HAD GAS HOLDERS TO WORK DOWN HERE IN ICED TEMPERATURE TO FASHION THE GLASS YOU ATTACHED TO THE DIFFERENT STATUES!

YOU ARE CLEVER! YES! SINCE THE GLASS WOULD MELT AT ROOM TEMPERATURE!

IT WAS SO SIMPLE! AN EXTRA PETAL ON A FLOWER! A BIT OF EXTRA FEATHER ON A BIRD! A SECOND HORN ON A UNICORN! AND ALL FILLED WITH THE GAS! HA-HA! AND NOW, ADIEU!

LEFT ALONE TO DIE, MISS AMERICA WITH A SUPREME EFFORT MANAGES TO STAGGER ERECT--

ENDURING EXCRUCIATING AGONY, MISS AMERICA IS REWARDED AS THE FLAME MELTS THE SPUN GLASS ROPE!
(GROAN) CAN'T - TAKE - MUCH MORE! I DID IT! I'M FREE!
A FEW MINUTES LATER--
ALL SET! LET'S GET GOING! WHAT THE--?!
THE ELEVATOR! IT'S COMING UP!
YE-O-WW! A GHOST!
SHE--CAN'T BE ALIVE!
WHAT LUCK! THEY'RE JUST LEAVING!
BEFORE THE CAR CAN GET AWAY, MISS AMERICA IS IN THE AIR DESCRIBING A SERIES OF DIZZY SWOOPS IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT THEIR ESCAPE!
OH, OH! THEY'RE GOING TO CRASH THAT POLE!
CRASH!
HELP! HELP! SAVE ME!
I'LL SAVE YOU--FOR A DIFFERENT TYPE OF HEAT! I REFER TO THE HOT SEAT!